



NEW ZEALAND

98th SESSION OF THE
INTERNATIONAL ORGANISATION FOR MIGRATION COUNCIL

STATEMENT BY
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CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

Thank you chairperson.

All of us here today are very aware that migration challenges and opportunities over the past year have been strongly characterised by changes in the international economy which have impacted on countries and regions across the world.

It is within this context that we would like to congratulate the Director General on completing his first year with the IOM, coming onboard at a time when we have witnessed increased global unemployment and its subsequent implications for the demand and opportunities for workers.

We also welcome the new Deputy Director General and express our confidence that her wealth of experience in international organisations will provide the Director General with valuable support, particularly during the period of change the IOM Administration is about to embark upon.

Member States, including New Zealand, are no doubt building in thinking about any long-term consequences of the economic crisis on their migration policies and how to prepare for future scenarios with regard to migration issues. The drivers of migration are unlikely to change radically; with competition remaining for workers of varying levels of skill. It will also be important to remember that for many, migration is linked to economic opportunity. New Zealand has remained mindful of this around its thinking on RSE, the Recognised Seasonal Employer scheme, and its benefits, primarily for workers from the Pacific region.

The New Zealand Government has therefore continued to strengthen RSE despite the economic downturn. This includes an investment in providing skills training to RSE workers in identified regions of New Zealand. If successful, the training, conducted outside of work hours with a focus on literacy, numeracy and financial understanding, may be rolled out to other RSE workers. This indicates that while New Zealand looks to improve returns for its horticulture and viticulture industries, we acknowledge that in the current economic climate upskilling workers and the wages earned by Pacific people participating in RSE is important for Pacific economies. We look forward to the imminent release of the World Bank and University of Waikato evaluation of RSE.

Inline with the IOM's 2009 theme for the International Dialogue on Migration - Human Rights and Migration; Working Together for Safe, Dignified and Secure Migration - and with the IOM's efforts in counter-trafficking, the New Zealand Government released its Plan of Action to Prevent People Trafficking in June this year. While to date there has been no verified evidence of people trafficking in New Zealand, we recognise that many migrants around the world suffer exploitation in what has been called the darker side of the migration experience. The Plan of Action, informed by public consultation and international best practice, represents a formalised response to trafficking and equips New Zealand with the tools to help fight this international crime with a specific focus on preventing trafficking, protecting victims and prosecuting offenders.

New Zealand has also reached a critical milestone in terms of immigration policy with the recent passage of new immigration legislation. Following the rewrite of our existing immigration law, the proposed changes received bipartisan support in the

New Zealand Parliament, resulting in a crucial outcome which will modernise and future-proof our immigration legislation to deal with the challenges and opportunities in the future.

Finally, New Zealand acknowledges the importance of the IOM implementing changes which will ensure the organisation can continue to fulfil its mandate effectively and efficiently. In particular we appreciate there is always a limit to the resources available and that, in acting in the best interests of Member States, the IOM must allocate resourcing where it is most effective. We would like to take this opportunity to express our desire that proposed structural changes continue to support the IOM's responsiveness to migration issues in the Pacific region. To this end New Zealand supports strengthened and transparent relationships between proposed Regional and Country Offices. We encourage the Administration to monitor the outcomes of any structural changes following their implementation and to make changes as needed to ensure the priorities of the organisation continue to be met.

We would like to thank the IOM for its in depth consultative approach in working towards making effective changes in the structure of the organisation and we look forward to Member States reaching an early consensus on the implementation process.